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| Moscow STATe university |
| Top 10 Important Events in US History: September 11, 2001 |
| Final project of World of Britain |
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# Introduction

On the morning of September 11, 2001, four airliners were hijacked by members of al-Qaeda who aimed to carry out suicide attacks against important targets in the United States. Of the four planes, one struck the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C., one crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, and the two remaining planes were flown into the Twin Towers in New York City. Often referred to as 9/11, the attacks resulted in extensive death and destruction, triggering major U.S. initiatives to combat terrorism and defining the presidency of George W. Bush. Over 3,000 people were killed during the attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., including more than 400 police officers and firefighters.

The attackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations. Reportedly financed by Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda terrorist organization, they were allegedly acting in retaliation for America’s support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East. Some of the terrorists had lived in the United States for more than a year and had taken flying lessons at American commercial flight schools. Others had slipped into the country in the months before September 11 and acted as the “muscle” in the operation. The 19 terrorists easily smuggled box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports and boarded four flights bound for California, chosen because the planes were loaded with fuel for the long transcontinental journey. Soon after takeoff, the terrorists commandeered the four planes and took the controls, transforming ordinary commuter jets into guided missiles.

# Targeting the World Trade Center

The World Trade Center was a commercial complex in Manhattan spanning over sixteen acres and containing a large plaza, seven buildings, and an underground shopping mall connecting them. The plaza’s centerpiece was the Twin Towers. The towers each had one hundred and ten stories and, together, were the workplace of approximately thirty five thousand people and over four hundred companies. The daytime population, location, and sheer size of the towers (each weighed more than 250,000 tons made it an obvious choice for a terrorist attack. In addition, the towers were considered to embody Americans' influence and power. In fact, in 1993, there was an attack in which explosives were detonated in a car parked beneath the World Trade Center, killing six people and injuring thousands.

The group targeting the World Trade Center (both in 1993 and in 2001) was al-Qaeda, an [Islam extremist terrorist system](https://www.ultius.com/ultius-blog/entry/sample-essay-on-the-history-of-islamic-terrorist-groups.html) started by Osama bin Laden. With franchise operations in at least sixteen other countries, al-Qaeda seeks to overthrow Middle-Eastern governments or other places with strong Muslim representation that do not force religiously-sanctioned social and political order. The attacks on American soil were made in an attempt to reduce support in the United States for the ‘offending’ governments, which al-Qaeda saw as a huge obstacle in building a global order under Islam. In addition, they were angry over the American support of Israel, as well as their part in the Persian Gulf War and their strong military presence in Middle Eastern countries.

# What happened on 9/11

On September 11, 2001, four planes were headed for California when they were hijacked by members of al-Qaeda aboard the plane. The first was an American Airlines Boeing 767 leaving from Boston. The plane crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center at 8:45 in the morning, leaving a smoking, fiery hole between the ninety third and ninety ninth floors . The impact killed hundreds of people and trapped hundred more in the floors above. People trapped by the damage and flames leaped off the side of the building to their deaths, desperate to escape. Evacuation began immediately, but eighteen minutes later, another Boeing 747, this one an United Airlines flight, sliced through the south tower between the seventy seventh and eighty fifth floors. This crash caused a huge explosion, fueled by the planes’ full gasoline tanks. Both buildings collapsed and severely damaged five other buildings in the World Trade Center complex. The pile of ruins stretched seventeen stories high, a monument to the desolation caused by the attacks.

**9/11 - Timeline of events**

A timeline of the September 11th terrorist attacks. Both towers completely collapsed within roughly eight hours of the first plane crash. America watched in horror.

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| **Time of event** | **Event description** |
| 8:46 AM | North Tower hit with American Airlines Flight 11 by Mohammed Atta and other hijackers. |
| 9:03 AM | Hijackers crash United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 75-85 of the South Tower. |
| 9:37 AM | Western facade of the Pentagon hit with American Airlines Flight 77. |
| 9:59 AM | The South Tower collapses. |
| 10:07 AM | United Airlines Flight 93 deliberately crashed into Somerset County, PA by hijackers. |
| 10:28 AM | North Tower collapses 102 minutes after being struck by Flight 11. |
| 5:20 PM | World Trade Center collapses after burning for hours. |

The two other planes involved in the 9/11 terrorist attacks had slightly different routes. The first, an American Airlines Boeing 757 left the airport in Washington D.C., headed for Los Angeles. Once hijacked, the attackers steered the plane towards the Pentagon where they slammed into the west side of the building, workplace to twenty four thousand people. Jet fuel from the Boeing 757 caused a devastating inferno that led to the structural collapse of a portion of the giant concrete building. All told, 125 military personnel and civilians were killed in the Pentagon, along with all 64 people aboard the airliner.

Meanwhile, a fourth California-bound plane–United Flight 93–was hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark International Airport in New Jersey. Because the plane had been delayed in taking off, passengers on board learned of events in New York and Washington via cell phone and Airfone calls to the ground. Knowing that the aircraft was not returning to an airport as the hijackers claimed, a group of passengers and flight attendants planned an insurrection. The passengers fought the four hijackers and are suspected to have attacked the cockpit with a fire extinguisher. The plane then flipped over and sped toward the ground at upwards of 500 miles per hour, crashing in a rural field in western Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m. All 45 people aboard were killed. Its intended target is not known, but theories include the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland or one of several nuclear power plants along the eastern seaboard.

# The aftermath

All in all, almost three thousand people were killed from a total of ninety three nations. Over twenty seven hundred people were killed in the Twin Towers attack, one hundred eighty four were killed during the attack on the Pentagon, and forty people were killed on Flight 93. In addition to the civilians and hijackers, three hundred and forty three firefighters and paramedics were killed, along with twenty three police officers and thirty seven Port Authority police officers. Only six people who were in the World Trade Center towers at the time of the collapse survived and almost ten thousand others were treated for injuries. The death toll was beyond catastrophic and devastating to a nation.

On September 12, 2001, the United Nations held an emergency meeting, in which they condemned the terrorist act, stating that “a terrorist attack on one country was an attack on all humanity”. For the first time in the history of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO decided to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states that an armed attack against one or more NATO countries is an attack against all NATO countries. The United States invoked their right of self-defense during wartime, meaning that a nation that has been threatened or attacked has the right to defend itself. The country was officially at war.

# America's reaction

In America, Congress was busy. In October 2001, United States Congress [passed the USA Patriot Act](https://www.ultius.com/ultius-blog/entry/civil-liberty-and-the-u-s-patriot-act), giving law enforcement officials the right to searching property without warrants, detain and deport, monitor financial transactions, and eavesdrop on phone conversations. This was met with mixed reviews, as many feared that the law would lead to overzealous infringement on civil liberties. Under the Patriot Act, approximately twelve hundred people were detained for a month without access to their attorneys.

October 7, 2001 marked the start of an American-led international effort to overthrow the Taliban’s hold in Afghanistan in order to destroy bin Laden’s terrorist base there. Before the operation was two months old, the United States had ousted the Taliban from power. However, the war carried on and American troops fought to defeat a Taliban insurgency campaign over Pakistan. It was later revealed in 2005 that in 2002, President George W. Bush authorized the National Security Agency in secret to wiretap domestic emails and phone calls without warrants.

The United States also enacted the Department of Homeland Security Act of 2002, an act that created the position of Secretary of Homeland Security and established the Department of Homeland Security, a cabinet-level agency. The purpose of this department was to ensure the national security of the country, in addition to providing information about terrorist threats and suggested security measures for the public, the government, and hubs like airports. Accomplishments of the Department of Homeland Security include training law enforcement to analyze threats and react accordingly, the launching of the ‘If You See Something Say Something’ campaign that encourages civilians to report suspicious behavior and activity, more in-depth screening of international passengers entering or leaving the United States, and the improvement of the country’s cyber infrastructure. Some believe that the implementation of these laws encouraged the breaching of the basic rights and liberties of citizens and non-citizens alike.

# 9/11 Causes

A day Americans will never forget. 9/11/01. There are many theories to why these attacks happened, the most reasonable being US foreign policies in the middle east, in particular its support of Israel, 9/11, is a response to foreign occupation, and the most controversial the CIA. All causes leading to the horrific attacks on America.

First cause is America’s foreign policies particularly in the support of Israel. Bin laden saying that this was the main reason al Qaeda is attacking America. Bin Laden’s judgment never came from the American culture but from the US support for Israel. Especially the support it gave to Israel’s invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982. This specific event triggered Bin Laden’s anti-Americanism. In retaliation his first actions involved a boycott of US goods in the 1980s. But as problems escalated in the Middle East many groups began to feel the same as Bin Laden towards America. Throughout this time ties between the Middle East and America deteriorated even further. What made it worse was the decision to deploy 500,000 US troops to Saudi Arabia after Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990.This resulted in even more resentment towards the United States and their polices.

The second cause or reason why 9/11 happened was because of America’s foreign occupation in the Middle East namely in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. In his book Dying to Win, political scientist Robert Pape examined modern suicide campaigns and concluded that they are driven not by religious zeal but by foreign occupation in other countries. This means that the suicide attacks were fueled not by religious beliefs but from the occupation of their country by foreign countries (the USA). This theory might explain why 15 of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudis, as there was a substantial US presence in the Saudi kingdom around that time, but it does not explain the other four hijackers, who were Lebanese, Egyptian and Emirati, none of those countries were occupied by the US. This shows how one can conclude that the 9/11 attacks were mainly fueled by nationalism not religion.

The third most likely cause of the 9/11 attacks was the influence of the CIA. In mid-1979, the same time as the Soviet Union deployed troops into Afghanistan, the United States began giving several hundred million dollars a year to the Afghan Mujahedeen insurgents fighting the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Army. With the Afghan Mujahedeen were Muslim volunteers from other countries, known as Afghan Arabs. The most famous of the Afghan Arabs was Osama bin Laden, known at the time as a wealthy and pious Saudi who provided his own money and helped raise millions from other wealthy Gulf Arabs. Later, Bin Laden organized the Al-Qaeda organization to carry on armed jihad in other countries; the primary target is the United States which is the same country that had helped fund the Mujahedeen against the Soviets. A number of analysts have described Al-Qaeda attacks as blowback or an unintended consequence of American aid to the Mujahedeen. In response to these claims the American government and Pakistani intelligence officials involved denied this theory. They said the aid went to the Pakistani government and then distributed through them. This broke the connection between the US aid and Al-Qaeda from a financial point of view.

With the three causes explained one could easily see how certain events ultimately ended in the attacks on the World Trade Centers. Whether it be from our foreign policies to secret CIA funding. The end result we all know. The death of over 3,000 men, women, and children. People’s lives were changed forever as a result. This shows how when certain leaders of a country conduct themselves in the wrong way people from the other countries see only the bad because that’s all that is portrayed. In this case Osama Bin Laden had great anger towards the US, and he acted on those emotions.

As you can see the causes of the September 11 attacks are inconclusive vague because of the number of theories and the detail they get into. But what we know for sure is that it happened and it will forever be in America’s history as a horrible tragedy that resulted in thousands of American lives lost and thousands more affected in some way whether it is the families of the victims or the families of the troops. This is a lesson to be learned for our future sons and daughters.

# 9/11 Effects

## Health issues

Hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic debris containing more than 2,500 contaminants, including known carcinogens, were spread across Lower Manhattan due to the collapse of the Twin Towers. Exposure to the toxins in the debris is alleged to have contributed to fatal or debilitating illnesses among people who were at ground zero. The Bush administration ordered the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to issue reassuring statements regarding air quality in the aftermath of the attacks, citing national security, but the EPA did not determine that air quality had returned to pre-September 11 levels until June 2002.

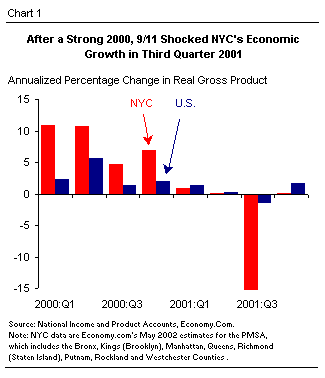
Health effects extended to residents, students, and office workers of Lower Manhattan and nearby Chinatown. Several deaths have been linked to the toxic dust, and the victims' names were included in the World Trade Center memorial. Approximately 18,000 people have been estimated to have developed illnesses as a result of the toxic dust. There is also scientific speculation that exposure to various toxic products in the air may have negative effects on fetal development. A notable children's environmental health center is currently analyzing the children whose mothers were pregnant during the WTC collapse, and were living or working nearby. A study of rescue workers released in April 2010 found that all those studied had impaired lung functions, and that 30–40% were reporting little or no improvement in persistent symptoms that started within the first year of the attack.

Years after the attacks, legal disputes over the costs of illnesses related to the attacks were still in the court system. On October 17, 2006, a federal judge rejected New York City's refusal to pay for health costs for rescue workers, allowing for the possibility of numerous suits against the city. Government officials have been faulted for urging the public to return to lower Manhattan in the weeks shortly after the attacks. Christine Todd Whitman, administrator of the EPA in the aftermath of the attacks, was heavily criticized by a U.S. District Judge for incorrectly saying that the area was environmentally safe. Mayor Giuliani was criticized for urging financial industry personnel to return quickly to the greater Wall Street area.

The United States Congress passed the James L. Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act on December 22, 2010, and President Barack Obama signed the act into law on January 2, 2011. It allocated $4.2 billion to create the World Trade Center Health Program, which provides testing and treatment for people suffering from long-term health problems related to the 9/11 attacks. The WTC Health Program replaced preexisting 9/11-related health programs such as the Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program and the WTC Environmental Health Center program.

## Economic

The attacks had a significant economic impact on United States and world markets. The stock exchanges did not open on September 11 and remained closed until September 17. Reopening, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) fell 684 points, or 7.1%, to 8921, a record-setting one-day point decline. By the end of the week, the DJIA had fallen 1,369.7 points (14.3%), at the time its largest one-week point drop in history. In 2001 dollars, U.S. stocks lost $1.4 trillion in valuation for the week.

In New York City, about 430,000 job-months and $2.8 billion dollars in wages were lost in the three months after the attacks. The economic effects were mainly on the economy's export sectors. The city's GDP was estimated to have declined by $27.3 billion for the last three months of 2001 and all of 2002. The U.S. government provided $11.2 billion in immediate assistance to the Government of New York City in September 2001, and $10.5 billion in early 2002 for economic development and infrastructure needs.

Also hurt were small businesses in Lower Manhattan near the World Trade Center, 18,000 of which were destroyed or displaced, resulting in lost jobs and their consequent wages. Assistance was provided by Small Business Administration loans, federal government Community Development Block Grants, and Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Some 31,900,000 square feet (2,960,000 m2) of Lower Manhattan office space was damaged or destroyed. Many wondered whether these jobs would return, and if the damaged tax base would recover. Studies of the economic effects of 9/11 show the Manhattan office real-estate market and office employment were less affected than first feared, because of the financial services industry's need for face-to-face interaction.

North American air space was closed for several days after the attacks and air travel decreased upon its reopening, leading to a nearly 20% cutback in air travel capacity, and exacerbating financial problems in the struggling U.S. airline industry. The September 11 attacks also led to the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as additional homeland security spending, totaling at least $5 trillion.

## Cultural

The impact of 9/11 extends beyond geopolitics into society and culture in general. Immediate responses to 9/11 included greater focus on home life and time spent with family, higher church attendance, and increased expressions of patriotism such as the flying of flags. The radio industry responded by removing certain songs from playlists, and the attacks have subsequently been used as background, narrative or thematic elements in film, television, music and literature. Already-running television shows as well as programs developed after 9/11 have reflected post-9/11 cultural concerns. 9/11 conspiracy theories have become social phenomena, despite lack of support from expert scientists, engineers, and historians. 9/11 has also had a major impact on the religious faith of many individuals; for some it strengthened, to find consolation to cope with the loss of loved ones and overcome their grief; others started to question their faith or lost it entirely, because they could not reconcile it with their view of religion.

The culture of America succeeding the attacks is noted for heightened security and an increased demand thereof, as well as paranoia and anxiety regarding future terrorist attacks that includes most of the nation. Psychologists have also confirmed that there has been an increased amount of national anxiety in commercial air travel.

# Life after 9/11

## The War on Terror

There have been a number of effects on the everyday lives of Americans made by the 9/11 attacks on the United States. First of all, United States troops invaded Afghanistan less than a month after the World Trade Center attacks to release al-Qaeda’s grip on the Middle East. In 2003, the United States troops invaded Iraq, which was not directly related to the attacks but was an important weapon in the War on Terror. In December 2011, troops were pulled from Iraq and the United States left them in a state of volatile democracy.

In 2014, President Obama aimed for our presence in Afghanistan to cease to be considered a combat mission, but rather a support mission. The [Afghanistan war](https://www.ultius.com/ultius-blog/entry/essay-on-the-taliban-taking-over-afghanistan.html) has been the longest war in United States history. Between the years of 2001 and 2011, nearly two million United States troops were deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq, with six thousand troops having been killed and approximately forty four thousand wounded. More than 18% of returned servicemen suffer from depression or post-traumatic stress disorder and 20% suffer from traumatic brain injuries.

## Immigration and deportation

Another effect made by the 9/11 World Trade Center attack has been the United States’ stance on immigration and deportation. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security meant the merging of twenty two other government agencies, including the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Customs Service. The department has streamlined deportation for criminals and law-breakers, leading to the number of deportations from the United States doubling. Between the years of 2009 and 2010, deportation rates reached almost four hundred thousand people annually, with only half being convicted of a criminal offense and the majority of those being low-level offences. With the implantation of the Secure Communities program, the law, established in 2008, allows local law enforcement to check on the immigration status of any person booked in a jail, despite whether or not they are convicted of the crime they are accused of. This law has led to the deportation of people who were simply stopped for something as minor as not using a turn signal while driving.

## Airport security

Finally, another drastic change brought on by the terrorist attacks on America is the change in procedure at national airports. The Transportation Security Administration was created after the attacks to use new and more effective security practices at every commercial airport in the country. Before, passengers could arrive thirty minutes before their flight and not worry about making it to their gate in time. Now, fliers should be prepared to spend hours in line as each person, bag, and item of clothing is scanned, screened, and scrutinized. The TSA also uses a watch list of individuals who they believe may pose a threat to safety and security. No one is safe from suspicion and must pass rigorous security checks to get clearance to fly.

## Moving forward

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center left both Americans and international citizens alike shattered and fearful. Other countries felt that the attack on the United States had been an attack on freedom everywhere. On September 12, 2001, the headline of a French newspaper read, “Today, we are all Americans”. The Queen of England herself sang the American national anthem for the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, Rio de Janeiro hung billboards of the city’s Christ the Redeemer statue embracing the New York skyline, and billions was donated all around the world by means of money and goods to relief and rescue organizations. The rest of the world embraced America as we embarked on the greatest changes in our country’s recent history. The effects of the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks still remain today, even with the resurrection of the 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero, opened exactly ten years after the fateful morning. Though the terrorist attack on American soil shook the country to its core, and despite the fact that we remain entangled with the Middle East to this day, the United States of American has proven that liberty and freedom will continue to persevere, even in the most unlikely circumstances.

# Conclusion

September 11th is the most tragic event and unforgettable day to Americans. Nineteen hijackers seized four commercial U.S. jets and crashed them into American symbols of the military and capitalism and shook the entire nation. As soon as it was evident that the massive destruction was an act of terrorists, everyone thought one thing: This Changes Everything. The attacks did change Americans: they became closer, more spiritual, less materialistic, but only for a while. However, lasting changes did occur in the nation's economy and security system.

In spite of terror and grief, Americans with utmost hope and compassion helped the persons in need. They prayed together and stood together. America fought against terrorists in Afghanistan, liberated the people of Afghanistan and helped in rebuilding their nation. The attacks of September 11th have made some people feel insecure, particularly the ones who lost their loved ones. People cared for their loved ones. Appreciation, gratitude and support to the fire fighters, the army and to the people who protect the country have increased. Prior to 9/11, people took freedom for granted and could not imagine witnessing an attack. Now most people are aware of the "price of freedom" and the vulnerability of the "American way of life". On the whole, the September 11th attacks not only affected people physically, emotionally and spiritually, but also affected the way people view their lives and the world. When a country experiences a catastrophe like the September 11th attacks, one expects everything to change.

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